



HRSP NEWSLETTER

U.S. Department of Justice, Criminal Division, Human Rights and Special Prosecutions Section

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Croatian National Extradited to Bosnia to Stand Trial for War Crimes

On November 22, 2016, Azra Bašić was extradited to the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bosnia) to face allegations of war crimes against Serbian nationals detained in the Yugoslav National Army Center in Bosnia during the Bosnian conflict. Bašić, who served in the Croatian Defense Council, is accused of killing one victim by slitting his throat, and of beating and torturing others, including setting victims on fire with kerosene and carving crosses and letters into their foreheads.

Bašić, a native of Croatia, entered the United States in 1994. She settled in Stanton, Kentucky, about 45 miles east of Lexington, and became a naturalized United States citizen in 2007. In 2007, Bosnia submitted a formal request to the U.S. Department of State seeking her extradition based on her alleged participation in war crimes, and thereafter further developed and perfected its request. In 2011, the U.S. Department of Justice filed a Complaint for Extradition in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky, which issued a warrant for Bašić's arrest.

On July 27, 2012, a U.S. Magistrate Judge found the evidence against Bašić "highly convincing" and ruled that Bašić could be extradited. On April 14, 2016, after a protracted habeas process and subsequent appeal of the habeas denial, the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit affirmed the extradition ruling. Bašić's petition for certiorari to the United States Supreme Court was denied on October 3, 2016, clearing the way for the decision by the U.S. Secretary of State to extradite Bašić. The U.S. Marshals Service then surrendered Bašić to Bosnia for trial on the war crimes charges.

This case was handled by attorneys for the U.S. Department of Justice Human Rights and Special Prosecutions Section (Michael Surgalla), Office of International Affairs (Terry Schubert and Marcus Busch), Criminal Appellate (David Lieberman), and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Kentucky (James Arehart).

People with information about former human rights violators in the United States are urged to contact U.S. law enforcement: Human Rights and Special Prosecutions Section hrsptips@usdoj.gov or 1-800-813-5863; Immigration and Customs Enforcement, 1-800-347-2423 or online tip form at <http://www.ice.gov/exec/forms/hsi-tips/tips.asp>; and FBI's Genocide War Crimes Unit tips form at <https://tips.fbi.gov/>.